

**Testimony Submitted to the
Government Administration & Elections Committee Public Hearing
March 10, 2021
by Martin E. Cobern Ph.D.**

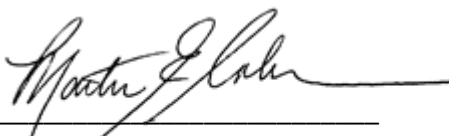
Honorable members of the GAE Committee, please accept this testimony in support of **House Bill No. 6578 (An Act Concerning Participation in the Electoral Process)** and **Senate Bill No. 1017 (An Act Concerning Election Administration.)** I have lived in Cheshire for 40 years, and vote in the 16th State Senate District, which is represented by Senator Rob Sampson, a Ranking Member, and the 90th House District, which is represented by Rep. Craig Fishbein, a member of this Committee.

Those of us fortunate enough to live in this glorious republic have a responsibility to preserve, protect and expand the reach of its primary means of control – the **ballot!** **HB 6578** takes a vital step in this regard by codifying into state law **Automatic Voter Registration (AVR)** as it is practiced now at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and I applaud that first step. As there are, however, many in our great state – particularly the elderly and the poor – who do not drive, we must also **expand** AVR to the Department of Social Services (DSS), HUSKY, Access Health CT, state colleges and universities and other well-regulated state agencies. As the addresses provided to these agencies are used to deliver benefits, they must be **accurate** and **up to date**. Their use will enhance the security and integrity of our elections by automatically delivering the most accurate residency information to cities and towns and by eliminating outdated and inaccurate¹ addresses and duplicative registrations. Eliminating these duplicate registrations also significantly reduces the workload for localities that could be susceptible to confusion on Election Day.

I also support **SB 1017** because it codifies the use of **secure drop boxes** for absentee ballots. Mailed ballots pass through many hands, require significant effort to track and may be subject to delays. These boxes are as secure as a street-side mailbox and more secure than a household one. Short of personally handing a mail-in ballot to the Registrar of Voters, a secure drop box is the most direct and safe method. ***Anyone interested in increasing the security of voting should support this initiative.***

I urge you to pass **HB 6578** but with **expansion** of AVR to other state agencies beyond the DMV, and I urge you to pass **SB 1017**.

Thank you,

Submitted by: 
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¹ 'Study uncovers flaws in process for maintaining state voter rolls,' https://news.yale.edu/2021/02/25/study-uncovers-flaws-process-maintaining-state-voter-rolls?utm_source=YaleToday&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=YT_Yale%20Today-Best%20of%20the%20Week%20Public 3-6-2021